



Open Space Steering Committee

Virtual Community Meeting
February 24, 2021

Agenda

1. Zoom Ground Rules
2. Publicly Accessible Open Space – Task 1
 1. Discussion: Definition, Purpose, Characteristics, Goal's review
3. Next Steps
4. Public Comment
5. Adjourn

Zoom Ground Rules



Proposed Draft Definition

Publicly Accessible Open Space in the City of Alexandria is:

Outdoor space that has guaranteed public access with the primary purpose being formal or informal recreation; or the conservation and protection of natural, cultural, or historic resources; and which enhances the health and well-being of Alexandria.

Definition

Outdoor space that is **readily available/open** for public access with the primary purpose being formal or informal recreation; the conservation and protection of natural, cultural, or historic resources; **and/or ~~which enhances~~ the enhancement of** the health and well-being of **Alexandria's residents and visitors.**

OR

Outdoor space **where** public access **is assured** with the primary purpose being formal or informal recreation; or the conservation and protection of natural, cultural, or historic resources; or which enhances the health and well-being of Alexandria.

Purpose

- The purpose and function of publicly accessible open space is to provide public spaces for community gathering, well-being, cultural and historical appreciation, and ~~human interaction and~~ outdoor enjoyment in the urban context.

OR

- The purpose and function of publicly accessible open space is to provide public spaces for human interaction ~~and~~, outdoor enjoyment, and preservation of nearby nature in the urban context.

Purpose

Publicly Accessible Open Space serves to increase the City's diverse types of open spaces; to protect and enhance its cultural history; to conserve its natural resources; and to create vibrant and useable spaces; in order to support a more healthy, livable, and sustainable City.

OR

The City of Alexandria seeks to preserve and enhance publicly accessible open space in order to provide citizens and visitors with guaranteed access to green spaces which support a healthy, livable and sustainable city; to enrich and enhance our cultural and historic heritage; to promote opportunities for community gathering and common use of natural resources in our diverse city.

Goals

Ideally, urban areas will contain a complement of publicly accessible open space types in order to serve local leisure needs; support revitalization goals; support environmental and sustainability goals; and contribute to the areas' sense of culture, liveliness, and identity. ~~It is also important to pursue creative solutions to providing open space and recreation facilities in these areas.~~ Space constraints in urban environments make it important to pursue creative solutions to providing open space and recreational facilities in these areas. It is impossible for all publicly accessible open space to meet all the City's goals for publicly accessible open space. However, it is the City's goal that collectively, publicly open space

Goals

1. Be a meaningful place ~~to the~~ for community gathering
2. Be multi-functional, ~~and~~ adaptable, and provide connectivity for pedestrians and recreational uses
3. Enhance ~~Provide~~ diversity and inclusivity ~~inclusion~~
4. Enrich understanding of our history and cultural traditions
~~courage social interaction~~
5. Promote health and well being
6. Provide equity and accessibility
7. Foster ~~Embed~~ environmental sustainability
8. Preserve and protect existing natural areas
9. Preserve and protect outdoor historical/cultural resources
(e.g., Fort Ward, waterfront, cemeteries)
10. Provide habitat benefits for wildlife

Characteristics

- **Accessible**
 - ~~Access into the publicly accessible open space~~ is generally at ground level unimpeded and/or has ease of physical entry to encourage use (physical access)
 - Publicly accessible open space must be with few exceptions available for use and enjoyment by the general public in perpetuity (time)
 - Accessibility may afford scenic views and promote appreciation of our history and cultural landscapes ~~for public enjoyment~~
- **Provides a balance between the built and natural environment**
 - ~~P~~Open spaces shall be designed to provides relief from urban development through natural features and/ or recreational opportunities-
 - Existing natural spaces shall be protected/preserved as natural space

Characteristics

- **Useable**
 - Allows for flexible uses/diversity of use
 - May have accessory structures to support its intended function (i.e.. amphitheater, restrooms, boardwalk, picnic shelter)
 - May have potable water, electrical power, plumbing to support recreation activities
- **Context appropriate design**
 - Meets community needs and context. Design options should reflect history, respond to changes in community needs and ~~in~~ recreation trends
 - Context appropriate (aesthetics of surroundings, demographic composition)

Characteristics

- **Equitably meets community needs for recreation, social, and cultural activities**
 - With few exceptions (e.g., reservable picnic pavilions), no request or approval is needed for informal, non-commercial use of the space by the public
 - Strives to ensure that all City residents have multiple types of open space within walking distance of home (i.e., diversity of types geographically distributed)

Thank you for your input!

Open Space Typologies

Classification	Description	Size	Service
Citywide	Contains multiple uses within park boundary including: attracts visitors from all over the City Example: Chinguapin Park	15-20 acres	0-25 miles from users
Neighborhood	May include multiple uses within park boundary; attracts nearby residents Example: Beverley Park	20,000 sq. ft. to 5 acres	0-5 miles from users
Pocket Park	Small open space; mainly single use attracting nearby residents Example: Sunset Mini Park	Under 20,000 sq. ft.	.25-0.5 mile or less from users
Natural Resource Areas	Includes open spaces that are primarily passive-use or preservation areas Example: Clermont Natural Park	No Minimum or Maximum	Citywide

Open Space Typologies

Classification	Description	Size	Service
Shared Use	Includes parks that share facilities with schools and recreation centers Example: Patrick Henry Field	5-20 acres (average)	0-25 miles from users
Destination/ Historical	Attracts users from beyond the region, typically because of particularly unique features Example: Fort Ward Park, Waterfront Park System	Varies	0-100 or more miles
Regional	Includes lands or facilities administered by other regional entities Example: Cameron Run Regional Park	50-75 acres	0-100 miles from users
Corridors/ Linear Parks/ Trailways	Includes trailways, corridors and linear parks that serve primarily as linear bikeway corridors, may include ROWs Example: Metro Linear Park	No Minimum or Maximum	0-100 miles from users

Next Steps

- Using the input collected from tonight's meeting staff will finalizing the definition, purpose, goals, and characteristics of publicly accessible open space
- Staff is meeting internally to discuss the standardization of different types of access easements
- **Next Meeting:** March 30, 2021

Information & Questions

- Information
 - [Open Space Planning](#)
- Questions
 - Ana Vicinanzo, Urban Planner II
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Public Comment

- Please use the "Raise Your Hand" feature or "*9" to inform staff you would like to comment.
- Comments will be limited to three minutes per speaker.

Thank you!

Next meeting is March 30, 2021 at 7 p.m.

Appendix

Publicly Accessible Open Space Draft Definitions

- 1 Space available for public use for the purposes of outdoor recreation and leisure, cultural arts, and the protection of environmental, cultural, and historic resources, and which is intended to enhance the health and well-being of the community.
- 2 Land reserved for the purpose of formal and informal sport and recreation, preservation of natural environments, and/or provision of green space.
- 3 Space for recreation and leisure, natural resources, casual use, historic and cultural resources and is either publicly owned or has guaranteed public access – including parks, plazas, trails, streets, and recreation facilities. (Arlington)
- 4 Land that preserves and enhances Alexandria's vegetative and recreational areas and protects natural and developed amenities intended as areas for respite, with sunlight and fresh air for leisure activities.

Open Space Definition

According to section 2-180 of the Zoning Ordinance, open and usable space is that portion of a lot at ground level which is:

- **(A) Eight feet or more in width;**
- **(B) Unoccupied by principal or accessory buildings;**
- **(C) Unobstructed by other than recreational facilities; and**
- **(D) Not used in whole or in part as roads, alleys, emergency vehicle easement areas, driveways, maneuvering aisles or off-street parking or loading berths.**

The purpose of open and usable space is to provide areas of trees, shrubs, lawns, pathways, and other natural and man-made amenities which function for the use and enjoyment of residents, visitors and other persons.

Note: The Zoning Ordinance does not distinguish between public, public-private, or private open space

Note: Above grade open space is currently considered open space – not reflected in the zoning ordinance

Intent of Publicly Accessible Open Space

As stated in the Open Space Master Plan (2003, updated 2017), it is an investment in a higher quality of life for ourselves and future generations.

- We seek to protect public open space because:
 - It connects the community: Our parks and facilities are the public's common ground that equitably bring together our vibrant and diverse community.
 - It improves well-being: Our programs and facilities motivate the community to make healthy choices and live active lifestyles through all stages of life and at all levels and abilities.
 - Its an investment in our environment: Our commitment to natural spaces provides physical, mental, and community benefits, while offering opportunities to engage with and conserve our natural resources.















